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The Andes' heart! how warm, how passionate!
 All stars, and leaves, and flowers, and birds,
 And gliding stream, enlivener of the scene!
 The rosy cascade leaps, just while I gaze,
 Between the rocky walls and swelling moss,—
 Its mirror spreads, itself reflects,
 Its rosiness so sweetly soft below,—
 Met farther down, by tinkling rills, that leap
 In graceful dance, from shaded ledge and glen,
 Fast tangled vines, and tropic bloom so gay,
 And lustrous plumage of the "Inca" bird"—
 A foreground gem, a living, emerald grace,
 For which our hearts leap up and give their thanks,
 Give thanks in unison with those that pause,
 Beside the cross, upon the dappled road,—
 The sacred cross of Love and Sacrifice! —
 And last, behold the amethyst trophy-tree,
 With wondrous vines in wondrous light and shade,
 The burning orchis cheek against its side,
 Contrasting with the pure white lucent bell,
 Among the great exotic leaves, each rich in light,
 Each soft in shade, *in shade that's full of light!*
 And trailing curious vines, and strange fair blooms,
 Which *until now*, their sweetness wasted there.
A sunbeam has sought out the spot,
 Burst through some forest cleft—hangs on that
 stem,
 That trophy shaft, whereon are characters—
 A name that brought a kernel to our taste—
 That brought us life-drops from the Andes' heart!
 Exquisitely refined! the sunny beam
 Glows just *above* the name—*not on* its etch:—
 A living beam from the great Sun of Art,
 Which floods at last, all artists and their works.

✕ NATIONAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

THE thirty-fourth annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design has, we believe, disappointed public expectation. The number of works exhibited is over eight hundred. Out of this very large catalogue not to exceed twenty can be called pictures of the second class—of first-class works there is not a single one, except it be Mr. Johnson's "Southern Life," which we are disposed to regard as, in several respects, a first-class character piece. Pictures of the third class, embracing many good and valuable things, number about seventy. The rest of the collection is made up of what we must call crudities, possessing, in many instances, good parts and points, but characterized by want of finish, defects in coloring, drawing, and perspective, imperfect conception of subject, and coarse filling in of detail. The general impression produced, therefore, is not a desirable one; it is one of disappointment if not of dissatisfaction. James and William Hart, Casilear, Tait, Hays, Gifford, Huntington, Kensett, Sonntag, Durand, Mignot, Shattuck, Jerome Thompson, have all done

well, but have not advanced in excellence over former years; Hicks has positively failed; Elliott is not as satisfactory as usual; Rossiter and Cropsey are extremely unsatisfactory; Church is not represented at all; Stillman offers a mere burlesque; so the record runs. The level of excellence is a moderate one at best. It would be a relief if we could discover progress in the younger race of workers, but, aside from Dix and Bellows, we do not remember having detected any marked advance over previous years' contributions.

The success of Church's "Heart of the Andes" doubtless has injured the Academy exhibition; for the visitor, fresh from the Tenth-street Studio building, would institute comparisons with Mr. Church's great work—how the best things in the Academy pale before this single canvas! Hence, on many occasions, a feeling and expression which have done the Academy exhibition poor justice. We think it is a fact that art taste has taken a long leap forward during the last two years. The public exhibition of the private collections of Messrs. Belmont, Aspinwall, Wright, and others, the Dusseldorf Gallery standing exhibition, the sale of many of the best works our best artists could produce, have all united to render the public more critical and more expectant. This is, certainly, a good sign, and our artists must bestir themselves or that much derided public will get the lead of them, and go abroad for works of first-class character, because such cannot be obtained from home studios.

We can but hope that, in future exhibitions, the committee will exercise severer taste in the admission. Such a course may displease some refused candidate and his friends, but it will do even them good, for it will (or should) prove an incentive to better performance thereafter. By pursuing a more discretionary and arbitrary course, the walls will be cumbered with less pictures, and thus add to the interest which the visitor must take in those exhibited. Think of a half dozen rooms filled, two and three deep, with paintings, and numbering over eight hundred; to give five minutes' observation only to each work would require sixty-six hours of hasty study. No person in his right senses would care to spend so much time upon immature works. Reduce the number to three hundred or less; give ten, fifteen, and twenty minutes to each, and

the cause of art will be profited vastly more than under the present latitudinarian arrangement.

The general judgment being against this year's exhibition will, we trust, have the good effect to stir up the artists to renewed industry, care, and study, for the coming year. If it fails to produce this effect we shall be inclined to think the exhibitions productive of little good to the artists themselves, to the cause of art taste, or to the public.

✕ THE ART COMMISSION.

WE are glad to learn that Mr. Buchanan has appointed as members of the Art Commission, created by the act of Congress for the adornment of our National Capitol, Messrs. H. K. Browne of Washington, J. R. Lambdin of Philadelphia, J. F. Kensett of New-York. The granting of this commission on petition of the artists of the country assembled in convention at Washington, was an act of simple justice to our art, while it arrested the misapplication of public money in cheap, traditional, tawdry, and unmeaning ornamentation, with which European decorative painters were covering the walls. Art is sadly caricatured at Washington. Commissions are obtained there, as they get water at Paris, by boring; by private and personal or political favor. The old brazen statue of Jefferson by Houdon, which stands, covered green with verdigris, before the White-House, is the only respectable piece of sculpture to be seen in the public grounds. It is graceful and dignified in action, and is a careful, faithful, refined, and valuable likeness. The Jackson, of Mills, is a monument of that reckless American audacity which rushes without forethought or preparation from the farm, or work-bench, or counter, into the arena of legislation, diplomacy, letters, science, or art. It is the work of a boy who had reached no conception of the end or method of art, who had not studied so much as the organization of a horse, and whose triumph as a sculptor was the unattempted absurdity of throwing the animal on his haunches and balancing him in that position by the weight of his tail. The Jackson is a wooden toy figure in the dignified and characteristic